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DEPARTMENT FOR PRM/ANE

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SUBJECT: Monitoring and Evaluation for Save The Children-
Jordan Cooperative Agreement SPRMCO07CA049 "TaQleem Youth"

¶1. (U) RefCoord attended on December 27, the first graduation ceremony for students attending Save The Children-supported Ta'leem classes in Amman, Jordan. RefCoord met with Jason Erb, Deputy Program Director for Save the Children-Jordan, and with trainers and volunteers for the Taleem program. Fifty vulnerable Iraqi students received certificates marking their successful completion of vocation training in "customer service" and basic communication. Jordanian trainers and educators attended the graduation ceremony and expressed support for the students. After the ceremony, RefCoord met with 23 students to discuss their experience. The students ranged in age from 17 to 25, and had come to Jordan without completing secondary school in Iraq.

¶2. (U) In accordance with the program objectives, students had learned conflict resolution strategies and strengthened their connections to one another and to Jordanian community organizations. The students said they learned valuable coping skills in the program that helped them manage their own anger and frustration about their life as refugees. Most students agreed that living among Jordanians was not a problem. On the streets, students had heard negative comments generally directed at Iraq and Iraqis, but none of the students had experienced direct discrimination or exclusion.

¶3. (U) In discussion with RefCoord, the students praised the vocational training, but they expressed concerns about the training's limitations and about what next step they might take to improve their lives in Jordan. Two young men said they were seeking [illegal] employment in Jordan to put their newly acquired skills to use. They recommended that future training include a stronger English language component, as this was the most frequently requested skill in the hospitality sector where many of the students sought jobs.

¶4. (U) Employment opportunities was the most frequent request from the students and the Iraqi volunteer trainers who worked with them. The trainers said that poverty was increasing among the youth and their families. One Jordanian woman explained that she knew the students turned their 5 Dinar (USD 7) weekly transportation stipend over to the family as a source of income and walked to school. The students said they were able to find work, although at exploitive salaries and under uncertain conditions. One student said that she was hired and worked for a company but was turned out when police came to check for illegal employees. When she was fired, her employer refused to pay her the remaining salary and threatened to turn her in if she insisted.

¶5. (U) Students also raised the issue of their uncertain

future. After completing training, only seven of the 23 students knew they would be resettled, with four of them accepted in the U.S. program. All of the other students expected to remain in Jordan. One young man joked, "I want to be resettled in Abdoun (an affluent section of Amman)." The young people asked repeatedly for the opportunity to study beyond secondary school in either university or vocational institutions.

¶6. (U) Comment: Save The Children program graduations will continue through the end of December 2008 and into the first week in January 2009. Save The Children will meet its targets as outlined in the extended cooperative agreement. The feedback from students indicates the Ta'leem program was a positive experience, particularly the training and the resulting community-building. However, the programming most obviously benefits young people awaiting resettlement to countries where they can plug into a welcoming employment and education system.

¶7. (SBU) Comment continued: The GOJ approved the Save The Children program with the stipulation that the training not lead to employment in Jordan. Secondary school-aged young people represent a significant number of Iraqis in Jordan. They presently have no access to legal employment or to further study opportunities. Post continues to press the GOJ to permit Iraqis to benefit from vocational training, and the right to legal employment. End comment.

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